

UNAPPROVED

CITY OF BLAINE
ANOKA COUNTY, MINNESOTA
CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP
Thursday, July 20, 2017

6:30 p.m.
Cloverleaf Farm Room
10801 Town Square Drive

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Ryan at 6:30 p.m.

ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Mayor Tom Ryan, Councilmembers Dave Clark, Andy Garvais, Wes Hovland, Julie Jeppson, Jason King, and Dick Swanson.

ABSENT: None.

Quorum Present.

ALSO PRESENT: City Manager Clark Arneson; Planning and Community Development Director Bryan Schafer; Finance Director Joe Huss; Economic Development Coordinator Erik Thorvig; Public Services Manager/Assistant City Manager Bob Therres; Interim Police Chief/Safety Services Manager Dan Szykulski; City Attorney Patrick Sweeney; Communications Technician Roark Haver; Senior Engineering Technician Jason Sundeen; and City Clerk Catherine Sorensen.

3.1 2040 Goals Discussion.

Planning and Community Development Director Schafer stated the City is in the process of updating the Comprehensive Plan, in accordance with state law. The process began in April and staff and consultants (WSB) have met monthly since then. Work has included reviewing the existing comprehensive plan, analyzing and collecting data about land use, housing, parks, and natural resources, and developing revised, draft goals for each of these chapters. Critical to the work has been the public participation, which has consisted of meeting with the Park Board, the NRCB, the Planning Commission, an online engagement tool, and the general public at the Blaine Festival and the Blaine Farmer's Market.

Planning and Community Development Director Schafer explained staff has spoken to approximately 100 residents to date, and plan to complete more engagement efforts as the draft plan is developed. Overall, the people that have been engaged are very happy with the direction of the city related to growth, development, and re-development. People like the parks, the recent trail connections, the Lakes development (for its variety and park amenities), and the variety of housing options in the city. By far, the largest concern is Highway 65. Concerns include the congestion on the roadway, approaching and entering the roadway, and accessing/crossing the roadway on foot or bike. People have remarked that the recent interchange at Central Avenue and 125th Avenue has been a vast improvement to the corridor. He noted Breanne Rothstein with WSB was present to provide the Council with an update on the Comprehensive Plan.

Breanne Rothstein, WSB, explained a Comprehensive Plan was the City's foundation upon which more specific laws and policies are applied and administered. She reported a Comprehensive Plan allows a City to plan ahead for residents, buildings and businesses. She discussed the community engagement efforts that had been conducted by staff to date. She was pleased to report that the vast majority of residents were happy to be living in Blaine. She reviewed the revised draft goals for land use, housing, natural resources, and parks, as amended in conjunction with city staff, the Parks Board, the NRCB and Planning Commission, and the feedback from the public. She commented on some of the updates related to changing trends in growth and development or demographic changes in the community. She discussed the next steps for the Comprehensive Plan and asked for comments or questions from the Council.

Councilmember Hovland stated he would like to see the Comprehensive Plan addressing potential redevelopment sites. City Manager Arneson commented an area plan may be a better step for redevelopment projects once the Comprehensive Plan was complete.

Councilmember Clark indicated he has been around for the past three Comprehensive Plan processes. He understood that other communities have citizen committees that assist with drafting the Comprehensive Plan and questioned how Blaine got to this point. Planning and Community Development Director Schafer reported the budget for the Comprehensive Plan was reduced and the process has been streamlined. He explained that a number of communities have realized the citizen committees have not been effective and were quite costly and that utilizing already-engaged citizens from the City's Boards and Commissions would be beneficial to the process. He stated staff will be introducing the Comprehensive Plan to citizens in other ways.

Councilmember Swanson was pleased the City had several manufactured home parks as this offered affordable housing options to residents. He stated he would like to see an over 55 community in the City and stated he was concerned with the City of Blaine's lack of access to transit, both local and regionally.

Councilmember King requested further information regarding sustainability. Ms. Rothstein provided the Council with a definition for this term and how it would apply to the Comprehensive Plan.

Councilmember King asked what flexibility the Council had at this point in the Comprehensive Plan process. Planning and Community Development Director Schafer explained tonight was a check point for the Comprehensive Plan and encouraged the Council to bring their goals forward to staff over the coming weeks.

Councilmember Clark questioned what new requirements were being placed on the City. Ms. Rothstein commented on the affordable housing requirements being implemented by the Met Council. Planning and Community Development Director Schafer stated the Met Council had set a goal of 1,000 additional units of affordable housing for the City of Blaine. He reiterated to the Council that this was only a goal.

Councilmember Garvais commented on the need for the City to set goals and begin making redevelopment plans for the Kmart and Northtown mall area. Economic Development Coordinator Thorvig stated the Council would address these areas this fall in order to provide staff with direction on these redevelopment areas.

Councilmember King stated he wanted to see more language included within the Comprehensive Plan regarding sustainability and water conservation.

Councilmember Jeppson recommended green energy options (renewable, solar and wind) be included in the Comprehensive Plan.

Councilmember Hovland questioned when the Comprehensive Plan was due. Ms. Rothstein reported the final document was due to the Met Council on December 31, 2018, but would have to be provided to neighboring communities in July of 2018.

Councilmember Hovland stated he believed it would be prudent of the City Council to hold a one-day retreat to address the Comprehensive Plan.

Councilmember Clark supported the Council holding a retreat in order to dig deeper into the Comprehensive Plan.

Mayor Ryan and the entire City Council thanked Ms. Rothstein for her thorough report.

3.2 Discuss Proposal for Private Indoor Recreation Use on Land Near City Hall.

Economic Development Coordinator Thorvig stated staff has been approached by a group interested in developing an indoor sports/recreation building in the City of Blaine to serve youth sports. He said they discussed several sites; however, the site the group is most interested in is the land next to City Hall that was previously identified for the community center. The site is currently 7.39 acres; however, 1.58 acres is under agreement with another user looking to develop an office building. That leaves 5.81 acres available for other uses. The group provided a narrative and outline for their concept.

Economic Development Coordinator Thorvig explained that at this time the concept is still very preliminary and more conversations need to occur with the group regarding any relationship the City may have in the endeavor both currently and in the future. At this time, staff is looking for direction as to whether the site makes sense for this use, and whether the City should continue the discussion about how/if the City is a partner in the future.

Chad Johnson introduced himself and their team to the Council and provided a background on the need for additional private indoor recreational space in Blaine. He explained there was a growing need for gym space for basketball, volleyball, soccer, lacrosse and other youth sports. He stated he would hate to have to cap the number of youth that are able to participate based on the lack of gym space in the community. He explained he was proposing to build a 75,000-square foot gym space, which would be equivalent to five full sized basketball courts. He anticipated this facility would be used by the community for youth sports and for tournaments.

Councilmember Hovland questioned the age of youth that would be using the proposed facility. Mr. Johnsons reported organized youth sports begin around age 5 or 6 and run through 12th grade. Further discussion ensued regarding daily non-peak programming for the gym space.

Councilmember Clark asked if this facility would be heading towards a profit or non-profit route. Mr. Johnson stated this was a great question that has yet to be considered.

Councilmember Clark described the leasing situation for the Fogerty Ice Arena. He indicated he would support leasing the land to a non-profit for \$1 per year in order to get this facility off the ground. However, this would not be the case if the organization was for profit.

Councilmember Swanson supported the facility being non-profit as well.

Councilmember Hovland stated local pull tab funds may be available to assist with this facility.

Mr. Johnson reviewed several renderings with the Council and commented on the various construction options. He estimated the building could be constructed for under \$10 million.

Councilmember King commented on the recent community center and noted this matter failed to gain approval from the public. He encouraged the group to work with staff on detailed financials and to report back to the Council at a future meeting.

Councilmember Jeppson stated she would like further information regarding all of the sports that would be allowed to use the proposed gym space. Mr. Johnson discussed the growing need for indoor space in the community for volleyball and basketball.

Councilmember Clark encouraged the group to pursue anchor tenants for the space by speaking with local sports organizations to gain buy in on the gym space.

Mayor Ryan anticipated the Fogerty arena model could work for the proposed gym space.

Councilmember Garvais stated he would like to see more numbers as well. He understood there was a growing need for gym space and looked forward to hearing more about which community organizations were interested in utilizing this space.

Councilmember Clark requested staff provide this group with field usage information for the City of Blaine.

Mayor Ryan stated next week he would be appointed to the National Sports Center Board. He understood that the NSC wanted to have an indoor facility and asked if the group have spoken to the NSC. Mr. Johnson explained he had not been in touch with the NSC.

Council consensus was to direct the group to speak with staff regarding detailed financials along with community organizations to gain buy in on the gym space.

3.3 2018 Budget Update – Departmental Requests.

Finance Director Huss presented for Council review and discussion an overview of the 2018 General Fund Budget that incorporates initial departmental requests. At the budget workshop of June 8, Council reviewed progress on the 2018 General Fund Budget as well as the budget schedule for the remainder of the year. Staff presented for Council's review the departmental requests that are currently under City Manager review. It was noted the City Manager and staff will be reviewing division level responsibilities and identifying programs and activities that fall within the City's budgetary guiding principles. He reported requests will be considered relative to their fit in the City's five-year budget model. He commented on several gap solutions such as increasing the levy, reprioritizing the levy or for the Council to reduce expenditures. Staff provided further comment on the budget and requested feedback from the Council regarding the prioritization of the 2018 budget.

Councilmember Swanson stated he supported new positions for communications, a mechanic and the Police Department Sergeant.

Councilmember King requested further information on the Police staffing needs. Interim Police Chief/Safety Services Manager Szykulski provided further information on the Police Department's staffing needs. City Manager Arneson recommended the Council add a Sergeant and two new patrol officers for 2018.

Councilmember Clark explained he would like to see the amount of new dollars the Council would have to work with for 2018 and would then like to work backwards from there on prioritizing how the funding would be allocated.

Councilmember King recommended a future worksession meeting be held to discuss park upgrades for potential additional softball fields. He asked if the City would be considering a space needs study for the 3rd floor of City Hall. City Manager Arneson explained this item was included in the 2017 budget.

Councilmember King questioned how much revenue the City was anticipating to receive in permit fees due to the hail damage. City Manager Arneson estimated the City could receive as much as \$1 million in permit fees in the building and inspection department from the recent storm, but noted this would come at a cost for inspections.

Councilmember Swanson stated he would like to see an additional \$100,000 set aside for the Pavement Management Program (PMP).

Councilmember Clark supported the City having enough staff to cover the amount in inspections that will be required in the next year due to the hail storm repairs that were needed throughout the community. City Manager Arneson reported the City currently had two interns and a contract person to assist with storm inspections.

Further discussion ensued regarding a potential levy increase and the Council's need to fully fund the PMP. Councilmember King supported the Council holding another budget worksession to more closely discuss the PMP.

Council consensus was to direct staff to hold a budget worksession meeting on Thursday, August 3rd.

OTHER BUSINESS

Councilmember Garvais commented on the parking restrictions on Edison Street and noted the residents would like to have the restrictions lifted from their neighborhood. City Manager Arneson stated it would take Council action to lift the parking restriction and reported this action could be taken on Thursday, August 3rd. He recommended the "No Parking" signs remain in place along Marina Circle Drive NE.

Councilmember Clark stated he supported the restrictions being lifted based on the comments brought to the City by the neighbors.

Councilmember Hovland commented he would only support lifting the parking restrictions if the majority of residents signed a petition.

Councilmember King asked if parking has been a concern this year. Interim Police Chief/Safety Services Manager Szykulski stated the Police Department has not had many parking issues, but has had some concerns with issuing permits.

Councilmember Clark requested staff send a letter to the residents in this area what the City Council intends to do.

Councilmember Hovland understood there were some issues with pets and pet waste at the Blaine Festival outside of the pet area. He questioned how the City would monitor this issue. Public Services Manager/Assistant City Manager Therres explained staff patrolled this area on a daily basis and stated he has not heard any concerns from parks maintenance personnel.

Economic Development Coordinator Thorvig provided the Council with an update on the 3M golf event.

The Workshop was adjourned at 9:12 p.m.

Tom Ryan, Mayor

ATTEST:

Catherine Sorensen, CMC, City Clerk
Submitted by TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.